

Meadowlands Environment Center

The 15 employees of the Meadowlands Environment Center (MEC) are a blend of NJMC staff as well as professors, students and staff from Ramapo College of New Jersey. The MEC is a NJMC facility operated by Ramapo College and is probably the most public face of the Commission's work. Thousands of school groups take advantage of the MEC's range of educational programs year round in addition to the visitors and tourists that are attracted by its permanent exhibits.

Milestones of 2004-2005:

Meadowlands Science Center and Observatory



Stars that will be visible from a new observatory.

To better serve this special element of NJMC operations, in February 2005, the NJMC Board of Commissioners appointed a registered architect to design and construct a new observatory and laboratory classrooms to expand the MEC facilities in Lyndhurst. Plans call for the new building to comply with environmentally-friendly building standards established in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. The observatory will be one of only a handful of observatories in northern New Jersey and the only one associated with an environment center.

Programming for Visitors and Students with Disabilities

In February 2005, the NJMC Board of Commissioners allocated \$80,000 to establish a new curriculum at the MEC to develop an Educational Resource Center promoting new strategies and technologies to increase participation by individuals with disabilities. Programs and workshops will educate teachers and supervisors from the public and private sector about new teaching techniques and technology available to assist those with disabilities.

Scholarship Program for Meadowlands Students

The NJMC's Board of Commissioners established a new scholarship program in Spring 2005. Outstanding students in all 14 Meadowlands District municipalities who intend to study environmental science or an environmental-related field in college were eligible to apply for the scholarships.

New Outreach to Seniors

The NJMC's Board of Commissioners allocated \$25,000 for a new series of programs for senior citizens starting this summer at the MEC. Staff will create an ongoing series of recreational, social and educational programs. Activities for this summer will include guided nature walks, concerts, movies, workshops and other interactive programs from MEC staff and local experts.

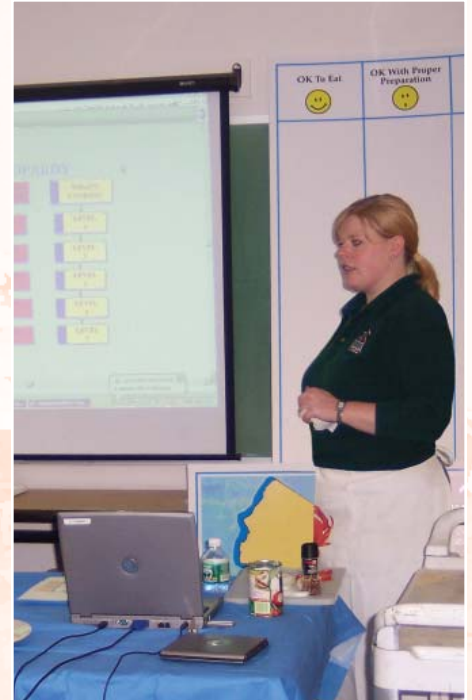


The Nice and Easy Orchestra performs at an outdoor senior concert in Richard W. DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst.

On a high-tech note, the NJMC, in partnership with Ramapo College, announced in October 2004 a new learning tool to share the ecological wisdom gleaned from the Meadowlands with senior citizens.

Thanks to a three-year, \$462,000

grant from the National Science Foundation, the new Senior Environmental Experiences (SEE) program will use video conferencing technology to allow environmental education and science programming to be brought in real time to seniors in community centers and assisted



An education coordinator teaches in the classroom while being broadcast via satellite to senior centers.

living facilities in the region. The first senior centers received programs in March 2005. By the end of the first three years of the project, 32 community centers and assisted living communities will be involved in the live interactions. More will participate through the distribution of CDs and videos.



Students learn about the many species living in the Hackensack River Estuary.



Executive Division

The 12-member Executive Division supports the Executive Director of the NJMC and provides legal counsel, maintains intergovernmental relations, handles press relations, and gives administrative support. In addition to these tasks, the Executive Division takes on special projects. For example, the decision by the NJMC's Board of Commissioners to create a unified tourism marketing effort in the Meadowlands and a more vibrant art movement in the District was coordinated through this division.



Richard W. DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst.

Milestones of 2004-2005:

Destination Meadowlands

To promote the economic component of the NJMC's four policy areas, a program for unified destination marketing in the Meadowlands was coordinated between the Meadowlands Environment Center, the NJMC's Wetlands Group, and the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce, which took the lead in the project.

The NJMC's Board of Commissioners launched the program in June 2004, with a two-part funding package totaling \$415,000 focusing on the exploration of the Meadowlands' wild areas.

Part One is a \$225,000 grant for the Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau to be established by the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce.

This includes the creation of information kiosks, printed marketing materials, training programs for hotel staff, and Internet direct marketing.

Part Two delivers a grant of \$190,000 to the New Jersey Audubon Society for the creation of a Hackensack Meadowlands



The Marsh Discovery Trail in winter, located in Richard W. DeKorte Park, Lyndhurst.

Birding and Wildlife Trail and a Places To Fish Program. The program will include half-day and daylong loop tours, and 4,000 bilingual trail and fishing guides.

In addition, in December 2004, the NJMC's Board of Commissioners included \$500,000 in the MAGNET plan to sustain the Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau for five years.

In March 2005, the Convention and Visitors Bureau unveiled the first of many electronic visitor kiosks that will dot the Meadowlands and let visitors and residents know about the many attractions, hotels, and restaurants the District has to offer with eco-tourism as an emphasized component.



The first of five interactive kiosks to be located throughout the Meadowlands District.

Arts Advisory Board

In order to foster a sense of “place” and innovation in the true sense of a renaissance, the NJMC’s Board of Commissioners formed the Arts Advisory Board in July 2004. The board is made up of one individual from each of the 14 District municipalities, one delegate from the environmental community and one from the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Since it was founded, the board has overseen the beginning of a Meadowlands Sculpture Garden in Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst and is administering the NJMC’s arts grants program.

Meadowlands Sculpture Garden

In February 2005, the NJMC commissioned New Jersey artist Elaine Lorenz to create the first sculpture for the Meadowlands Sculpture Garden. Lorenz, who has exhibited her work throughout New Jersey and New York, designed a walk-through sculpture called “Earth Spiral.”

Lorenz’s piece was selected through a process managed by the New Jersey Council on the Arts. Artists were asked to submit a sculpture design to the Meadowlands Arts Advisory Board that symbolized the intertwining of contemporary society, nature and economic development with respect for the natural resources of the New Jersey Meadowlands.

Arts Grants

Also in February, the NJMC’s Board of Commissioners allocated \$30,000 for community arts grants. Each individual or group requesting a grant will submit a letter to the NJMC detailing a specific project and the amount requested. Grants will range from \$500 to \$1,000.



Members of the newly formed Meadowlands Arts Advisory Board.



A model of the first sculpture for the Meadowlands Sculpture Garden.





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